

Type up underlined parts &
fill out, including listed figures.

Mr. Hilsman

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Also RSB memo on Cuba,

TRANSCRIPT OF BACKGROUND PRESS AND RADIO NEWS BRIEFING,
FRIDAY, AUGUST 24, 1962, 4:00 P.M.

MR. REAP: There have been so many stories, so many people talking about Cuba and guns and Soviet troops and the like in Cuba that we have asked Mr. Hilsman to come and try to sort out some of this stuff for you.

Roger Hilsman is Chief of our Intelligence Bureau and everything he says, of course, is background.

MR. HILSMAN: Thanks. There have been lots of rumors and everything, and I must say I can't resist the temptation to make a comment on hard and soft information here, when you have a situation with lots of refugees and bizarre gossip and everything else. We do have some hard information. I will try to confine myself to that.

But just for the stuff coming out of Miami, I'd like to read to you a paragraph--as I say, I couldn't resist this temptation--from the "Guns of August", by Barbara Tuchman. This was the World War I era, and I'm reading from her book:

"On August 27, a seventeen-hour delay in the Liverpool-London Railway service inspired the rumor that the trouble was due to the transport of Russian troops who were said to have landed in Scotland on their way to reinforce

the Western Front. From Archangel they were supposed to have crossed the Arctic Sea to Norway, thence come by ordinary steamer to Aberdeen, and from there were being carried by special troop trains to channel ports."

Then there is a skip.

"...In the gloom following the Amiens despatch with its talk of German numbers",

which was very bad news

"thoughts turned unconsciously toward Russia's limitless manpower, and the phantoms seen in Scotland took on body, gathering corroborative detail as the story spread.

"---They stamped snow off their boots on station platforms--in August; a railway porter of Edinburgh was known who had swept up the snow. 'Strange uniforms' were glimpsed in passing troop trains."

Well, I think there is a certain element of this kind of rumormongering, and what I have got here is hard information, and that is that the Soviets have resumed large-scale military deliveries to Cuba in late July, and this followed a lull since early in 1962.

Q Roger, just a bit slower.

MR. HILSMAN: What?

Q Go ahead.

MR. HILSMAN: What?

Q Just a bit slower, please.

MR. HILSMAN: Okay. The Soviets have resumed large-scale military deliveries to Cuba late in July, and this was after a lull since early 1962. Now, we are looking at this information and attempting to get more. Of course it's a matter of concern not only to us but to the entire Hemisphere. And what I give you is our present assessment of the information currently available and, as I say, we are getting more. At least eight Soviet vessels are believed to have delivered military cargo to Cuba during this period from July '62 through August 8th. Additional cargoes have been delivered since that time.

Q What were those first two dates?

MR. HILSMAN: July 26th through August the 8th.

Q Roughly how many?

MR. HILSMAN: I didn't understand.

Q Roughly how many additional cargoes?

MR. HILSMAN: Eight Soviet vessels were delivered, were to have delivered military cargo to Cuba.

Q You said additional cargo.

MR. HILSMAN: I started a new sentence, but I stopped to answer a question. At least eight Soviet vessels

are believed to have delivered military cargo to Cuba and more ships are believed to be en route with military cargo.
The total up to now may be as many as 20 ships.

Q The 20 ships includes all of those who have delivered, are there or are en route?

MR. HILSMAN: That's right.

Q This includes the ones en route?

MR. HILSMAN: That's right.

Q Twenty?

MR. HILSMAN: As many as 20.

MR. REAP: Eight plus 12 more.

MR. HILSMAN: You know, give or take a couple.

Q We had a figure of 30.

MR. HILSMAN: I'm talking about cargo ships.

Q Right.

MR. HILSMAN: Not passenger ships, but cargo ships. And, you know, I'm not giving you an exact number.

Q All flying the Soviet flag?

MR. HILSMAN: All Soviet ships. Now, this military cargo included large quantities of transportation, electronic and construction equipment.

Q Do it again, transportation--

MR. HILSMAN: This military cargo included large quantities of transportation, electronic and construction equipment, such as communications vans--

Q Communications what?

MR. HILSMAN: Communications vans, radar vans, trucks and mobile generator units. From what we have observed of this cargo, it appears that much of it will go into the improvement of coastal and air defenses of the military cargo.

Q Did you say "much" or "most of this will"?

MR. HILSMAN: Much.

Q Of coastal and what?

MR. HILSMAN: Of coastal and air defenses. It may include surface-to-air missiles, which the Soviets also supplied Iraq and Indonesia, as you know. It may include. It's compatible with this.

Q Iraq and Indonesia?

MR. HILSMAN: That's right.

Q What are the range of them?

MR. HILSMAN: Surface-to-air missiles.

Q How big?

MR. HILSMAN: Well, it would be in about the same ballpark as our Nike, similar in the Soviet equipment to our Nike. Now, our judgment is that the limited, the very limited offensive capabilities of the Cuban armed forces will not be significantly improved by the equipment that we have identified today.

Q It's ^{not} offensive, you say?
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HR. MILSMAN: That's right. You see, I said "From what we have observed of the cargo, it appears that much of it will go into the improvement of the coastal and air defenses", and from what we have seen of it, what we have identified, it will not improve, significantly improve, the limited offensive capabilities of the Cuban armed forces.

Now, going to the passenger business, a large number of additional Soviet military specialists have arrived in Cuba. Well, let me say it this way, a large number of additional Soviet specialists.

Q Not military specialists?

MR. HILSMAN: I will break it down, you see. A

large number of additional Soviet specialists have arrived in Cuba during this same period. We estimate that this total is probably around 3,000 but it could be as much as 5,000. Now, some of the total are clearly economic technicians, agricultural and other kinds of economic technicians, and the rest are Soviet military specialists. And let me say this, that the numbers involved of additional Soviet military specialists is not incompatible with training and setting up the complex equipment that we have seen. You know, it's what you would expect to set up and train people in the military equipment that we have also seen.

There is no solid information that any of these

military personnel are in combat military units.) Nor is there any solid information that personnel from other bloc countries are involved here.

Q But are they in uniform, Roger?

MR. HILSMAN: No. We haven't seen them in uniform. Now, this new military build-up accompanies a step-up of Soviet support--well, I should say the new military support accompanies a step-up of Soviet support for the regime in other ways. The Soviet Union has endorsed Cuban Communism and the leadership of Castro and its expanded economic aid to try to relieve Cuban shortages. The moves come at a time when the regime is facing economic deterioration and rising popular discontent. And in these conditions, in these circumstances, the Cuban regime hopes to stiffen the banks of its supporters by getting this aid and to frighten its enemies by new demonstrations of Soviet support.

Let me say also--let me point out that the decisions, the decisions on the part of the Soviets, must have been made several months ago for the deliveries to be arriving at this time. That is an important point, I think.

Q You mean it wasn't done by radio? *Paul Carter*

MR. HILSMAN: No. I should think it antedated that.

Q You say several months ago.

MR. HILSMAN: Well, yes, I would think so. It

would take us this long. And I don't have any reason to believe that they are that much more efficient than we are. I would think that from the Soviet point of view that what you have here, the major significance of this is a recognition of Cuba, a deepening of Soviet involvement with this Cuban regime, a decision to prop it up, I think one of the consequences is that it should be harder for the Cairo people, for example, to treat it as a member of the neutral bloc.

Now, I'm not suggesting that it's necessarily a full member of the Soviet bloc from the Soviet point of view. But it certainly does reveal, I think, a decision on the part of the Soviets to prop it up, to become more deeply involved with the regime.

Q How about those ships that are out at sea? Are they passenger or cargo?

MR. HILSMAN: They are mixed. I think they are preponderantly cargo. There are still a couple of passenger ships to be accounted for. Of course I hedge on this part of it until the returns are all in. You don't want to say that some of these might not be Cubans returning from training, some of the passengers on some of the ships yet to dock.

Q You can't make any guess on the additional personnel that is actually en route now?

MR. HILSMAN: No. Yes, you remember what I said

here was that totalling all of them, those who have already arrived, those that are en route, the total is probably, we guess, about 3,000, though it could be as much as 5,000. But we would estimate, counting them all, at the level of about 3,000.

Q Does that take into account the Soviet technicians who could have arrived a long, long time ago, right after they started this whole business?

MR. HILSMAN: Yes.

Q This is total? This is not now? This is not in addition?

MR. HILSMAN: This is total. There were a few hundred, a very few hundred of them before, but the total arrived and en route is probably around 3,000 but could be as much as 5,000.

Q How good is our intelligence in Cuba (a); and (b), with the Swiss there and other allied Embassies, why isn't it better?

MR. HILSMAN: Well, Peter, I think that the answer to this is that it depends upon, you know, this word "intelligence" covers an awful big ballpark, if you're talking about factual information, really hard facts, you know, so many tanks, so many this and that, it's damned good. If you're talking--but when you talk about intelligence, you are also talking about crystal-ball gazing, what is so-and-so

going to do six months from now. And that is just as good as men's minds are, and men differ, you know. With the same information men make different predictions.

So let's say that, bringing up an unhappy experience, if you're talking about judgment kind of intelligence in connection with the Berlin wall, we predicted that the Soviets were going to do something to stop the flow of refugees and, you know, we sort of said we don't know whether it's going to be at the sector, borders, or where it's going to be. We predicted they are going to do something about it. We didn't have intelligence reports saying there is a whole warehouse full of bricks with, you know, carpenters standing by in isolation. We didn't have that kind of intelligence there. That is what I would call hard-core intelligence, you see. In this case, I think our hard intelligence is very good.

When you come to the predictive kind, you know, for example, I'm talking as of this moment, if for four months this goes on steadily like this, some of my estimates here as to what the purposes of it are, the motives might change, depending upon what happens in the next three months.

Q I was talking about hard intelligence and the reason for the question, as you well know, even today there are ticker reports of all kinds of troops coming ashore and dressed in battle uniforms, and so on.

MR. HILSMAN: Yes.

Q This, you think, is part of the rumor?

MR. HILSMAN: The reason I read you--I know it's silly, but the reason is I was just amused, having just read the "Guns of August", that, for example, I can remember one report I read in the last few days, which is about a Cuban who says, "My cousin Joe, you see, was up at such-and-such a point and he saw 5,000 Chinese Communist troops, armed, you see, Chinese Communist troops there in uniform." Now, he went on at some length and the last line of the report said, "Of course, knowing my cousin Joe, I guess maybe it's only 1,000."

[Laughter]

Q Well, are these 3,000?

MR. HILSMAN: You see--

Q You mentioned that your judgment might change on the purpose and the reason for all this.

MR. HILSMAN: Yes.

Q What's your judgment now on the purpose and reason for all this, beyond just the coastal and air defenses? Why are the Russians doing this at this point? Why did they make their decision to do it?

MR. HILSMAN: Let's go back to the time when they made the decision. We mustn't think of this decision of the Soviets in terms of August 24, 1952. You must think of

it as a few months ago, you see. And what I said was I think this is a decision to go a little further in terms of recognizing the Cuban regime. I don't think that it has gone so far that the Soviets are regarding the Cuban regime necessarily as a full member of the bloc. But it is a decision to go a little further. It's a deepening of Soviet involvement with this regime. It's a decision to prop it up. I mean this would be our judgment at this moment.

Q But why?

Q The question is why the decision? Why?

MR. HILSMAN: Why the decision?

Q Yes.

MR. HILSMAN: Well, first of all, you feel a little bit more confident about the pro-Communist proclivities of the regime. It's always useful to have another pro-Communist regime around. And, if so, it's useful to prop it up. It's useful certainly to the Soviets to have a pro-Communist regime in the Western Hemisphere.

Q Is it possible they might have felt the regime was in great danger of collapsing and being overthrown and they couldn't afford that kind of a propaganda black eye?

MR. HILSMAN: Well, it's perfectly true that there has been a lot of economic troubles and other kinds of

troubles in Cuba. Our judgment has not been that it was on the verge of collapse. So I wouldn't put it anywhere nearly that strongly. On the other hand, the Cuban regime has certainly been having economic and other difficulties. And I think that once you make a decision that you know this can be trusted a little bit more, its pro-Communism can be trusted, then you also make a decision to prop it up. I just wouldn't go so far as to say it was in danger of imminent collapse. I really don't believe this, and nobody else really believes it.

Q Could you tell us a little more the hard information as to the kind of equipment that has been landed recently? You said much of it involved this transportation, electronic and construction equipment. What else did it involve?

MR. HILSMAN: I picked out the stuff that was of military significance. The rest of it involved essentially civilian-type trucks and, you know, tractors and things like that.

Q But nothing in the way of tanks, planes and the rest of this jazz?

MR. HILSMAN: That's right. We have seen no tanks involved in this thing. Some of these things are crates. Of course you rarely crate a tank.

Q Yes.

MR. HILSMAN: But let me repeat what I said before. It looks very much like the sort of stuff you would use to strengthen your coastal and air defense systems, i.e., a high proportion of electronic and radar type communications vans.

Q Roger, could you go into your estimate as to the significance of surface-to-air missiles, if they have them, at least as we see it in terms of any threat to our own security? It has always been my understanding, perhaps erroneously, that if and when they started getting missiles and things of that kind, we were going to be very, very concerned.

MR. HILSMAN: Well, I distinguished between surface-to-air missiles and missiles, you know, ICBM's, for example.

Q Right.

MR. HILSMAN: I don't think surface-to-air missiles are something that you need be as alarmed about as you need be about an ICBM.

Q Right.

MR. HILSMAN: Why would they do it? Well, the Cubans have certainly had a steady barrage of propaganda that we are violating their air space.

Q Right.

MR. HILSMAN: Now, one thing about this one which I would think would give us all concern is that Guantanamo,

you know when the planes are landing they are undoubtedly going to be getting close to the borders and some are going to stray in bad weather and everything else. Well, one wonders where are they going to deploy these things. If they deploy them around the borders of Guantanamo with the idea every time a plane slips a little bit that they are going to shoot it down in a perfectly legitimate landing, this is bad.

Q But they don't have bad weather at Guantanamo, and they come in over the ocean.

MR. HILSMAN: Well, I was speculating.

Q Why would it be that?

MR. HILSMAN: I was speculating.

Q I mean they had three days of rain last year.

[Laughter]

Q Mr. Hilsman, these 3,000--

MR. HILSMAN: There is one poor gentleman over there [indicating] who has been trying to get in. I think we ought to give him a crack.

Q Do you write off Dr. Jose Miro Cardona's statement as just bunk?

MR. HILSMAN: What does he say?

Q He says, "On July 31, two Russian ships entered Mariel harbor and practically all civilians were forced to leave the port. The cargoes discharged included

armored vehicles, anti-aircraft machine guns and some large concealed weapons. The troops which landed wore dark green uniforms, white helmets and carried machine guns. Miro Cardona said the troops were transported to the San Julian Air Base which is completely under control of Russian troops as Cuban soldiers have been evacuated from there."

Now, is that all the bunk?

MR. HILSMAN: Well, a lot of what that says is just another way of saying some of the things I have said. Some of it goes much further. I would say only that.

Q Well, armored vehicles--

MR. HILSMAN: You know, you listen to a report coming from people who have got a real interest, you know, in getting us involved, I would take it with a grain of salt. I know John and Peter have called me several dozen times over the last year about continuing reports of Chinese Communist divisions in Laos when there were none. But Vientiane certainly claimed there were, and they had political motives for trying to give this impression.

Q We haven't seen anybody with dark green uniforms around the Island?

MR. HILSMAN: No.

Q Is there any area that has been declared off limits to Cuban civilians or militia?

MR. HILSMAN: There are certainly security areas

where some of this equipment is going.

Q And Cubans are not permitted there?

MR. HILSMAN: Yes.

Q Where are those high security areas?

MR. HILSMAN: I think there are limits as to how far I can go. By the way, somebody pointed out to me Miro Cardona got his information from a couple of letters that had been mailed out, and this again raises a question about them.

Q All right. Now, could I follow this, please? I want to be clear. Are Cubans, including Cuban militia, banned from these high security areas?

MR. HILSMAN: I don't know. Look, when I said high security areas I meant that the casual tourist or a Western Embassy fellow is not allowed to walk inside.

Q Because some of the reports that we get from these interested parties say that even the militia are banned from some areas.

MR. HILSMAN: Well, this we do not know, whether a high security area excludes Cubans that are qualified. There are plenty of high security areas around in this building which ordinary Americans are excluded from. So I say there are certainly high security areas in which there are Russians, whether or not all Cubans are excluded from them I would doubt it myself. But I certainly wouldn't

doubt that the ordinary Cuban citizen wasn't going to be allowed in there, just as there are plenty of high security areas we wouldn't allow the ordinary American in.

Q Roger, you say it may include surface-to-air missiles.

MR. HILSMAN: That's right.

Q You can't go any stronger than that?

MR. HILSMAN: Not at this point. Look, you see crates. You see other equipment like vans which you identify as radar vans and electronic communications vans. You look at crates, their size, their shape and everything else. We will know a lot more when something is done with them, you see. But at this stage it is compatible with surface-to-air missiles, you know. I would expect it to be.

Q They look like it?

MR. HILSMAN: But we don't know it yet. The equipment is compatible with it.

Q Is it demolition equipment?

MR. HILSMAN: Not as such.

Q Could you identify it as demolition?

MR. HILSMAN: Demolition equipment?

Q Yes.

MR. HILSMAN: No.

Q Are these nuclear-capable missiles?

MR. HILSMAN: No. That is--

Q How do you know?

MR. HILSMAN: Not that we know of. Here again I would be very doubtful. The Soviets have not given nuclear warheads to anybody, to any of their allies, any of them at all.

Q Do we know the point of origin of these ships? Is it the same point of origin?

MR. HILSMAN: I just don't know. They are all Soviet ships.

Q I just wanted to pin down these figures. You say some of the 3,000 or up to 5,000 are economic and the rest are military specialists. Are most of them military specialists, or what would you say? Did you mean to imply there were more of them?

MR. HILSMAN: I don't know exactly how it breaks down, you know, right to the man. It would be foolish of me to hazard a guess at this moment.

Q I have a point which ought to be cleared up. You said this compares to only several hundred technicians who had been previously in Cuba. That was military and economic. There are only several hundred military and economic people?

MR. HILSMAN: Yes.

Q Are any of these people in uniform?

MR. HILSMAN: Not that I know of.

Q None of them are in uniform?

MR. HILSMAN: No. Let me check on that. [Conferring] There is no information on that.

Q Roger, could some of this communications gear be designed to track missiles sent off Canaveral?

MR. HILSMAN: Well, you see, here again I think your answer--we have to wait and see what's deployed because you know what I mean by electronics vans or radar vans.

Q No.

MR. HILSMAN: What?

Q No.

MR. HILSMAN: Well, --

Q It's like a moving van?

[Laughter]

MR. HILSMAN: The implication of this is that it's like a big truck and trailer. It's a package deal, which--we have them, you know. So that if you want to put in an anti-missile, not an anti-missile, an anti-aircraft missile site here and then the war moves on, you just hook it up with the prime mover and away you go. It's like an artillery communications van in our day.

Now, this would lead me--and I'm really speculating--to assume that they were anti-aircraft missiles rather than what you suspect. But that certainly is not inconsistent, you know.

Q You can't rule it out at this time?

MR. HILSMAN: You can't rule it out, that's right.

Q You say you doubt that these are nuclear capable because the Soviets have not given nuclear weapons to any allies.

MR. HILSMAN: Yes.

Q Well, now, what's different about this?

MR. HILSMAN: I'll go a little further than that. I would say the stuff we have seen is not consistent with nuclear-type missiles.

Q Is not?

MR. HILSMAN: Is not consistent with nuclear-type missiles.

Q The point I wanted to bring up here is this doesn't necessarily have to be given to an ally.

MR. HILSMAN: That's true.

Q How does that differ from our having Thors or Jupiters and we controlling warheads on foreign soil?

MR. HILSMAN: I have gone further than that.

Q Roger, how does this stack up--excuse me.

Q When you speak of rising popular discontent, what criteria do you use to arrive at that? What do you observe? What goes on?

MR. HILSMAN: Well, all sorts of them. But, incidents. For example, the Cubans themselves have broadcast

recently, bragging about killing an "el loco", a guerrilla leader. You know, the mere fact that they, in taking credit, they thereby admit that there have been guerrilla incidents, you see. That is one criteria. Then there are other kinds of reports and reports of the kind that Miro Cardona mentioned, you know, letters, and so on. These have to be taken with a grain of salt. But you pile them all up and you reach a judgment about the discontent. What level of discontent? Our judgment would be that this level of discontent of economic deterioration is not such as to lead us to believe that the regime was in any jeopardy.

Q Any secret newspapers or pamphlets or radio stations that you know of that are trying to address the people?

MR. HILSMAN: Let's say the whole spectrum of this.

Q Aside from the surface-to-air missiles, do you know of anything that came in in these recent shipments that shoots?

MR. HILSMAN: No. I don't know what's inside the crates. There may be machine guns in there.

Q Could we develop this thing you just said?

MR. HILSMAN: Let me make it sure now. I never did say that we know that there are or we have seen surface-to-air missiles.

Q I say aside from the possibility.

MR. HILSMAN: It's a possibility.

Q You say there is nothing to make us think the regime is in any jeopardy. You also indicate that the Russians think that the regime is here to stay. Do we think it's here to stay?

MR. HILSMAN: You're now in that area that Peter asked about, that crystal-ball area.

Q I know.

MR. HILSMAN: By the way, I don't know whether any of you have seen this. It came in late this morning, but you can have a little fun with this one if you want. This is a Moscow explanation of what's on the ships:

"Moscow in Spanish to the Caribbean broadcast:

Many ocean-going vessels flying the Soviet flag are nowadays making the long trip to the Cuban coasts carrying machine tools, wheat, and agricultural machinery. What exactly do the Soviet ships carry? This question was answered as follows, as the USSR Merchant Marine Department:

"Recently the ship GRUSIA was called the Noah's Ark of the Festival, and you know that is carried to Helsinki the youth messengers of

the Soviet Union and other countries who participated in the traditional youth meeting. At present the GRUSIA is on its way to Havana. It is carrying thousands of timed goods in its holds.

"In the Port of Nakhodka, in the Far East, another Soviet ship is loading lumber and combine harvesters."

That answers one of your questions.

"Cuba has already received some 7,000 tons of various fertilizers.

"The ship USKIUSNA, belonging to the Black Sea fleet, will have an interesting crossing. It will carry to Cuba some 5,000 tons of cereals. But this is not the crew's main task. The ship will tow a gigantic floating crane for Cuban port workers"

and so on and so forth and so on.

"The floating crane was built in shipyards of Bulgaria. The ship will leave in a few days."

Q Roger, how does this add up now, as to what they have from previous shipments and approximately what they have now in terms of equipment? How about their MIG capability and the rest of this? What can you tell us on that score?

MR. HILSMAN: The trouble is I didn't bother to get myself briefed on this thing and I'm out of date.

Q Can we approach it from a different angle then. How does Russian-bloc military aid to Cuba compare with Russian-bloc military aid to other countries, to Indonesia, Iraq, Egypt?

MR. HILSMAN: Well, as far as Indonesia is concerned, the grand sum total of what we have seen so far isn't a drop in the bucket if compared to what they have sent to Indonesia.

Q You said they had a limited offensive military capability. This means obviously they have some. They must have MIGs, tanks. I think we have all reported this before, MIGs, tanks--

MR. HILSMAN: That's right.

Q What other kinds of modern stuff do they have that you can tell us about without violating anything?

MR. HILSMAN: Some old B-26 bombers. Look, when I said "limited offensive capability", anybody with a gun has got a certain amount of defensive capability. I would say it's very little. You know, it certainly isn't enough to get off that Island anywhere.

Q Approximately how many men do they have under arms?

MR. HILSMAN: This is what I just didn't anticipate,

this one, John. I'm sorry.

Q Roger, this is perhaps out of your area a bit, but at some point if these shipments continue doesn't it pose a problem for the Hemisphere insofar as how far we are going to let them continue to ship in this kind of stuff?

MR. HILSMAN: You're right when you said it was out of my area.

Q I think it was back in March the Department announced the total value of the military stuff shipped in up to that point was about a hundred million dollars. Could you make any comparison dollarwise on the stuff that has now moved in?

MR. HILSMAN: Oh, I see. I thought you were leading up to a comparison with something like Indonesia.

Q No. In comparison to the previous period.

MR. HILSMAN: It would be silly for me to hazard a guess on it. We haven't seen the crates undone yet. Really, we are not at that stage in this development.

Q Can we get a little more clarification on the numbers of ships? As I recall, there was a statement about a week ago of five passenger, 11 cargos, that's right, isn't it, and then yesterday I believe 15 more were on their way. That runs considerably over your 20 level. I was just trying to reconcile the three sets of figures that we have been given.

MR. HILSMAN: Well, somebody mentioned a figure of 30. I put that at the outside of ships that are already there, that have arrived and are now en route. That is to be outside. I said as many as 20 cargo plus passenger.

Q As many as 20 cargo plus passengers?

MR. HILSMAN: Yes. I think 30 is a little high. Let's leave it at that, 30 for those who have arrived and are en route. This, of course, will change.

MR. REAP: How far away is en route?

Q At sea?

MR. HILSMAN: At sea.

[Laughter]

Q Do you have any estimate on the number of Chinese technicians in Cuba?

MR. HILSMAN: As far as we know, there are none.

Q Economic and otherwise?

MR. HILSMAN: Gee, I don't know.

Q There have been some?

MR. HILSMAN: Some Chinese economic technicians.

By the way, the reports of Orientals, etc., etc., one would not be a bit surprised if some of the agricultural technicians came from Soviet Asia, where a lot of work has been done in the agricultural thing, where you know they are getting Uzbeks, and so on.

Q Hasn't Castro put out propaganda showing

North Koreans teaching them how to grow rice, pictures and that sort of thing?

MR. HILSMAN: I was thinking in the military field. I know of no Chinese Communists in the military field.

Q You said earlier that--you mentioned the effect this would have on the Cairo nations, the neutrals, that they would have to look harder at how neutral Cuba is. Will it have any effect, or what effect is it having to the way we are looking at Cuba right now?

MR. HILSMAN: Well--

Q Or is this your area?

MR. HILSMAN: Thanks for the out.

[Laughter]

Q I know.

MR. HILSMAN: I think it's perfectly obvious and that it--you know, that you look at it as ominous, that you don't like it.

Q You said in assessing the importance of this, you put it in a negative way, our judgment is that the limited offensive capabilities would not be materially improved. But they will be improved some, wouldn't they?

MR. HILSMAN: Not significantly improved.

Q Let's take you back and see if we can get you to make a guess on how many military personnel there are.

MR. HILSMAN: Well, I said 3,000. The probable likely number of Soviet technicians is 3,000. I said that the number of military technicians at the outset would not be incompatible for setting up, training people in the equipment that we see. I hate to make a guess on this because two figures are running through my mind and I'm not sure which of them is really the soundest one. And one of them would mean that about 50 percent were military and the other would mean that about two-thirds were military. And I cannot remember for the life of me which of the figures is the one that we would judge the more accurate.

Q But at least half?

MR. HILSMAN: I would think so.

Q How about helicopters? Are there signs of helicopters?

MR. HILSMAN: Well, in these shipments I didn't see any.

Q This stuff is obviously expensive and complex, isn't it?

MR. HILSMAN: Yes.

Q So that it would require a lot of thought in Moscow before they undertook such a decision.

MR. HILSMAN: [Nodding his head] It is nothing of the order of what they have sent to Indonesia.

Q They sent far more?

MR. HILSMAN: Far more.

Q Including the communications vans and the rest of this?

MR. HILSMAN: [Nodding his head]

Q Well, the figure we get from Indonesia is something over half a billion dollars, 509 million or something like that, a few months ago.

MR. HILSMAN: They gave Iraq and Indonesia surface-to-air missiles, which is of the same order of complexity and expensiveness of this equipment.

Q Do they usually "give" their stuff away, or do they sell it?

MR. HILSMAN: It's calculated in their trade/exchange.

Q Is anybody studying whether this nullifies the Monroe Doctrine?

[Laughter]

MR. HILSMAN: Well, obviously people are studying every aspect of this.

Q Doesn't the shipment of surface-to-air missiles indicate a fear of invasion or attack? Of course we have been hearing rumors that something has been under way about Cuba for some months now.

MR. HILSMAN: Well, I didn't say there was any surface-to-air missiles. We don't know whether there are. I said equipment is compatible with.

Q You're sure of radar though?

MR. HILSMAN: Yes. We are sure of radar and electronics vans.

Q Can you use electronic and radar vans without surface-to-air missiles for any real useful purpose?

MR. HILSMAN: Sure, warning systems of other kinds. And this gentleman here [indicating] suggested one too, one possible use.

Q One minor question which no one has asked yet. What ports are these ships putting in to? Is it all going into Havana, or other places?

MR. HILSMAN: Several, four or five.

Q Four or five?

MR. HILSMAN: Yes, different ports.

Q Could you give us the names of the ports, or would this be difficult?

MR. HILSMAN: I think we ought not to, John, get into this.

Q Well, are the reports true that the unloading seems to--

Q Can you tell us whether there has been any particular reaction from any of the other Latin American countries yet to this thing?

MR. HILSMAN: I haven't seen it. As a matter of fact, they are interested.

Q Well, presumably through the OAS vigilance committee or whatever it was that was set up, other Latin American nations are aware of what's going on?

MR. HILSMAN: [Nodding his head]

Q Are the reports true that the unloading of these cargoes is done under security conditions?

MR. HILSMAN: Some of them have been done under security conditions, that's right.

Q By Soviet personnel, or who unloads them?

MR. HILSMAN: I don't know that it's exclusively by Soviet personnel. Soviet personnel have certainly participated in it, but I didn't have the impression that it was exclusively by them. But it was certainly under security conditions. This goes to the same point before, of security areas.

Q Do these cargoes contain machine tools and agricultural machinery?

MR. HILSMAN: We don't know what's in those crates, but some of the trucks and transportation equipment are civilian in nature and some are military in nature.

Q Thank you, Roger.

[Whereupon, at 4:52 p.m. the press briefing was closed.]